



College Guideline

Policy no:	MSBC:014
Approval date:	23/07/2025
Previous review dates:	
Next review date:	
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Inclusive Education (Supporting Students with Disabilities) Guideline

Policy

Mount St Bernard College (MSBC) is committed to embedding inclusive education in all school environments for students with disabilities (as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (1992)).

The school guarantees the right to inclusive education at all levels without discrimination and based on equal opportunity. Australia's commitment to the inclusion of learners with disabilities is reflected in the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and in the establishment of the Disability Standards for Education (2005), which elucidate and elaborate on legal obligations for schools. MSBC supports a commitment to inclusive pedagogy that embraces all learners regardless of their diverse needs.

The aim is to create safe and inclusive school environments for students with disabilities. Inclusive education focus' on developing the knowledge and skills of school staff and giving schools clearer guidance and specialist support to better respond to the needs of students with disabilities.

Rationale

Inclusive education is grounded upon the education of all learners within regular, heterogeneous classrooms with appropriate accommodations to ensure that the needs of all students are met. MSBC aims to meet obligations outlined in Article 24 of the United Nations' Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2005) of equity, access, opportunity and rights and recognises that education should be accessible "without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity..." within "an inclusive education system at all levels..." (United Nations, 2006. P.14).

Inclusive education is about being proactive in identifying the barriers and obstacles learner encounter in attempting to access opportunities and the "schools' goal is to remove the barriers and obstacles that lead to exclusion" (UNESCO, 2012). Rather than establish special programs MSBC aims to "expand mainstream thinking, structures and practices so that all students are accommodated" (Shaddock et al, 2009). Inclusive Education (Supporting Students with Disabilities) Guidelines

MSBC commits to continuing our journey towards a more inclusive education system at all levels and as part of our everyday practice in schools, educational settings and classrooms.

Our commitment means that teenagers and young people with disabilities and additional learning needs and from all social, cultural, community and family backgrounds, and of all identities and all abilities are able to:

- **attend** and are welcomed at MSBC;
- **access and participate** in a high-quality education and fully engage in the curriculum along-side their similar-aged peers;
- **learn** in a safe and supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination or harassment; and
- **achieve** academically and socially with reasonable adjustments and supports tailored to meet their learning needs.

Objectives

An inclusive education system at Marist-Sion College enables all students to be welcomed, accepted and engaged so that they can participate, achieve and thrive in school life. Inclusive education:

- ensures that students with disabilities are not discriminated against and are accommodated to participate in education on the same basis as their peers;
- acknowledges and responds to the diverse needs, identities and strengths of all students;
- occurs when students with disabilities and additional needs are treated with respect and are involved in making decisions about their education;
- benefits students of all abilities in the classroom and fosters positive cultural change in attitudes and beliefs about disability, in and beyond the school environment; and
- contributes to positive learning, engagement and wellbeing outcomes for students.

Procedures for Enrolment of a Student with a Disability

MSBC is an inclusive College and every effort will be provided to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities and/or additional learning/wellbeing needs. Reasonable considerations include:

- providing access to classroom materials through assistive technologies such as screen readers
- adapting the physical environment, for example, installing ramps
- modifying the curriculum and assessments, for example allowing a student to answer assessments orally or use a computer
- presenting classroom materials in a different way such as visual, oral or demonstrations
- adapting teaching style, for example breaking lessons and/or activities into smaller sections so they are easier to understand
- reducing the distance between classes/classrooms for students who have physical disabilities
- giving extra time to move from class to class
- allowing more time to complete an exam or assessment or giving the student rest breaks
- planning excursions in accessible locations, for example making sure the location is wheelchair accessible.
- Inclusive Education (Supporting Students with Disabilities) Guidelines
- It is not unlawful if an education provider cannot make an adjustment if it would cause unjustifiable hardship on the provider. Examples of unjustifiable hardships might include if there is:
 - a very high cost of providing an adjustment
 - risk to the safety of others if the adjustment is provided.
- If an education provider claims unjustifiable hardship, they need to prove that the adjustment would cause them unjustifiable hardship. An explanation of why must also be given to the student as early as possible.

Catering for a wide enrolment of abilities, MSBC has a Learning Support Department that caters for additional learning needs. As the resources of this unit are finite, assessment of the full needs of any year level in context of the special needs of a student must be given. Notwithstanding this, all students have equal access to the educational opportunities provided by the College.

1. Parents/Caregivers are required to provide documentation of any special educational needs of their child.
2. The Registrar is required to forward information regarding special education needs to the Middle Leader Diversity.
3. The Middle Leader Diversity is to contact parents to discuss the nature of the disability/additional learning need and arrange a Transition interview.
4. If an action plan is required, the Deputy Principal will invite support from Special Education consultants. Parents are asked to provide further information regarding the student's development, medical and academic history. An interview would take place with parents, Principal or nominee, Special Education Consultant and Learning Support Coordinator
5. A decision is then made by the Principal as to whether the school can support the student's specific needs.
6. If enrolment is accepted, the parents are involved in the development of a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). This process involves the Special Education Consultant (CES), Learning Support Coordinator (MSBC) and other staff as required.

Considerations

The ethos of Catholic schools supports an inclusive approach to education whereby all children are valued and welcomed. Marist-Sion College commits to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students with disabilities at all times.

References

Australian Government (1992). *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

Australian Government (2005). *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Shaddock, A., MacDonald, N., Hook, J. Giorcelli, L., & Arthur-Kelly, M. (2009). Disability, diversity and tides that lift all boats: Review of special education in the ACT. Chiswick, NSW: Services Initiatives.

Unesco.org. (n.d.). *Introducing UNESCO*. [online] Available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/about-us/who-we-are/introducing-unesco/> [Accessed 3 Dec. 2016]. Inclusive Education (Supporting Students with Disabilities) Guidelines

United Nations. (2016). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

See also (Related Policies and Guidelines)

- Assessment and Assessment Appeals Guidelines
- Student Code of Conduct